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ABSTRACT

This article reviews some of the topics relevant to education that librarians covered at the 1989 Special Libraries Association (SLA) conference: (1) space problems and space-saving solutions; (2) automation in media centers and academic libraries; (3) skyrocketing subscription prices; (4) collective bargaining by academic librarians; (5) growing information literacy among students; (6) accessing education statistics through ERIC; and (7) use of machine-readable data files. Information on SLA's Education Division is included. (MES)

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Librarians Look to New Systems and Sources

By Michael Keating
Research Manager

New York was the location for this year's Convention.

Managing Change was the theme of this year's Special Libraries Association (SLA) conference, held in New York City. The 1500 education librarians who attended the show learned how to manage, or at least cope with, some of the changes taking place in their field and facilities.

One change is that, more than ever, libraries are becoming cramped for space. Meeting sessions showed how to fit bulging collections into limited space. Vendors like Spacesaver, Aurora, Gaylord, and others demonstrated how their shelving conserved space in university law libraries and in other locations. The importance of weeding as a space-saving solution was highlighted. Two schools in North Carolina that incorporated weeding into their total automation program were applauded at one session.

Media centers are automating their circulation and cataloging operations at a fast pace. Software and supply firms like Follett, Demco, Bibliotech, and NOTIS demonstrated their systems in media centers and academic libraries. More than 80 percent of NOTIS' 124 installations are now in academic and research libraries.

Education librarians see journal and magazine subscription prices skyrocketing. A university librarian from Indiana spoke of the horror of paying $3000 for an annual subscription to a respected international scientific journal. Representatives from Faxon, EBSCO, and other subscription services showed how librarians can cope. Related conference sessions helped librarians choose the best books for their reference collections.

Librarians are actively involved in collective-bargaining units on their campuses. At the conference, the American Association of University Professors expressed its interest in representing academic librarians and library science educators.

One group of conference speakers concluded that students are becoming more information-literate. The speakers—administrators and librarians in leading university MBA programs—pointed out that students now must "make their PC's sing," and must skillfully tap into computer databanks. Mead Data with its Nexis, Dialog, Newsnet, and Disclosure were a few of the show exhibitors displaying computerized information services. Some of these exhibitors offer special discounts to school and college libraries.

Statistics for educators

ERIC (the Educational Resources Information Center) and machine-readable data files were the subject of much discussion at this year's SLA. Specifically, librarians learned about education statistics available on machine-readable datatapes. Many of these tapes are indexed and abstracted on ERIC's *Resources in Education* journal. Kinds of information administrators and librarians can tap into on machine-readable data files include: academic achievement surveys, enrollment trends, campus crime totals, and statistics on comparable schools and universities.

"A lot of data is collected in education surveys, but only a limited amount is published," pointed out Charles Missar, an

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Touring the aisles

Here is a selection of literature from exhibitors at the Special Libraries Association Conference. To request a copy, use the appropriate number on the Reader Service Cards, pages 9 and 10, 51 and 52, in this issue.

Use Elecompack high density mobile storage systems from Metropolitan Business Systems, Inc., for files, books, computer tapes, archives, and on. Elecompack offers an economical alternative to conventional storage units. For a copy of this six-page color brochure, use 251.

Selected from full-line listings, the special Library Supply and Equipment catalog from Demco offers 68 pages, in color, of supplies, furniture, and promotions specially tailored to library needs. There are pictures of each offering, descriptions, and complete specifications with complete pricing. For a copy of the catalog, use 252.

Just for librarian use is the current software catalog from Follett Software Co. Transition to automation is made easier with Circulation Plus, which is described in this catalog. Networking systems are covered, as are single-concept software programs, like A-V Catalog Writer. For a copy of this 20-page, full-color catalog, use 253.

All expected and usual library information management operations are integrated in a single data base. Working with specified goals of individual libraries, BiblioTech uses its automation systems and specialists to help tailor VAX computers to fill these needs. For details and a request form, use 254.

System flexibility is the key with Quik-Lok Aurora Shelving by Richards-Wilcox. Adaptability means that these shelving systems hold everything from newspapers and magazines to reference shelves. Get a copy of this four-page color brochure that provides ideas for use as well as showing Quik-Lok's five standard colors. Use 255.

Get a CD-ROM service that provides access to 2,000,000 newspaper articles from The Newsbank Electronic Index. A 12-page brochure provides background on the service and tells how it works through simple instructions on operating each phase of the program. There's an offer of a free trial. Use 256.

Sixteen color pages provide the full selection of library seating options from Gaylord Bros. There are side chairs and arm chairs, stacking chairs, stools, juvenile chairs, and more. There are choices of material and finishes. Learn about them all through descriptions and pictures. For a copy of the catalog, use 257.

information consultant who spoke at the conference. Missar, who has worked with ERIC and the National Institute of Education Research Library since 1966, pointed out that educators can make detailed analyses of education trends using unpublished information on datatapes. Researchers can also spin off parts or subsets of the data onto separate disks.

At the University of Florida-Gainesville, the academic affairs department and graduate students most often use the school's 1900 machine-readable data files. According to Suzanne Brown, head of the University's education library, administrators track enrollment trends, faculty salaries, and statistics on comparable institutions with the files. Tapes are cataloged on the University of Florida's online system, as well as in a statewide network.

Marydee Ojala, a Kansas information consultant and former academic librarian noted, "Anyone doing any sort of longitudinal study on school population trends and related subjects would find these machine-readable data files very valuable." What's needed, says Ojala, is a user-friendly interface. Librarians should also work to get this numeric information out of the mainframe environment and onto a PC, said Ojala.

At the University of Georgia libraries, use of machine-readable data files should continue to grow, predicts Deanna Roberts, head of education resources. Academics at the University who need statistics from the files usually contact the library's reference department with its 12 staffers skilled in obtaining information from ERIC and other files. The University's data services department also assists educators who need statistics from machine-readable data files.

Charles D. Missar of Washington, D.C.

Availabilities

To find the kinds of reports and statistics available on machine-readable files, scan copies of ERIC's *Resources in Education*. The journal is available in many college libraries and online through the ERIC database. *Resources in Education* began abstracting machine-readable data files in early 1988.

It's possible to check for information availability on the home campus or school computer center as well as nearby college education departments.

Two other sources are ERIC's headquarters in the U.S. Department of Education at 202/357-6088 or the ERIC reference facility at 301/656-9723.

To learn more, or to join the Education Division of SLA, call 202/234-7000. There are over 200 librarians and administrators in SLA's Education Division. The 1990 conference will be held in Pittsburgh, June 9 through 14. ■

SLA Convention exhibits.

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